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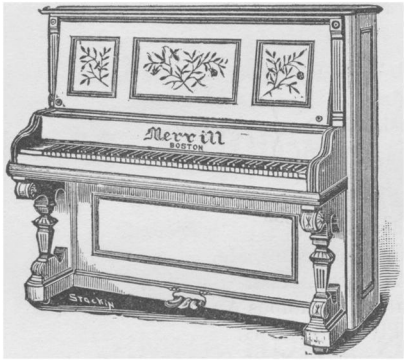

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THE BANQUET ON THE SEA.

BY HEZEKIAH BUTTERWORTH.

Given to the International Peace Congress at Antwerp ,by the King of Belgium, through his representative, Aug. 30, 1894.

I.

The sky was bright; the river glassed
All nations' flags round Antwerpen,
As down the Scheldt our steamer passed
That sun-crowned day at Antwerpen:
The high tower in the clear air played;
The dyke grass gleamed in sun and shade,
And cannonless the ramparts made
Peace smile on Peace at Antwerpen.

II.

We never can forget that day;
Thanks, glorious King! Thanks, Antwerpen!
Thanks, burgomaster! On our way
Adown the Scheldt from Antwerpen,
Emblem of Peace the waters lay,
God's open book in face of day;
We heard afar the sweet chimes play,
As sunk the towers of Antwerpen!

III.

Below the sea, above, the skies,
That afternoon near Antwerpen,
Lay like a dream of Paradise
As faded ancient Antwerpen;
The willows smiled by sunlight kissed;
The dyke grass, walls of amethyst;
The Scheldt, without a breath of mist;
The day was Peace, O Antwerpen!

IV.

O burgess of the ancient town,
A statue stands in Antwerpen;
Before the town house looking down
Towards the sea from Antwerpen;
A glorious fount its feet enfolds—
What means the hero there who holds
A severed band? An emblem moulds
The people's hearts of Antwerpen!

V.

The burgess laughed, those happy men,
As on we passed from Antwerpen;
"That statue stands for Liberty,
And Liberty is Antwerpen.
'Tis Justice's hand that makes us free:
'Tis Justice that on land and sea
Makes Peace eternal; blest are we
Since Justice governs Antwerpen!

VI.

O burgess, burgess, tell the tale,
Your legend grand of Antwerpen!
"Yes, friends of Peace, and you will hail
That statue dear to Antwerpen;
Antigonus, a giant old,
Laid on the sea a tax of gold,
And every prospered ship he tolled,
That turned its sails toward Antwerpen.

VII.

"And if some trader failed to pay
This giant's tax on Antwerpen,
Him seized the lord, and cast away
His severed hand at Antwerpen.
Young Brabo led a noble band;
He slew this giant of the land,
Cut off his head, and threw his band
Into the sea at Antwerpen.*

VIII.

"The Northern season came and went,
To Antwerpen, from Antwerpen,
But golden ships with storm-sails spent
Moored in the calms of Antwerpen.
So when tax gathering war is done,
May Peace be statued in the sun,
And round her feet pure fountains run
As in the Square of Antwerpen.

*Antwerp means "the thrown hand."